

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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JAMES POMPEY,

Plaintiff,

COMPLAINT

vs.

Case No.:

SK ASTORIA REALTY, LLC,

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Defendant.

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Plaintiff, JAMES POMPEY (hereinafter the “Plaintiff”), through his undersigned counsel, hereby files this Complaint and sues SK ASTORIA REALTY, LLC (hereinafter, the “Defendant”), for injunctive relief, attorney’s fees and costs (including, but not limited to, court costs and expert fees) pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §12181, et. seq., of the AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (“ADA”), the NEW YORK CITY HUMAN RIGHTS LAW (“NYCHRL”), and the NEW YORK STATE HUMAN RIGHTS LAW (“NYSHRL”) and alleges:

JURISDICTION AND PARTIES

1. This is an action for declaratory and injunctive relief pursuant to Title III of the Americans With Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12181, et. seq., (hereinafter referred to as the “ADA”). This Court is vested with original jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §1331 and 2201, and through the ADA.

2. Venue is proper in this Court, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1331(B) in that all events giving rise to this lawsuit occurred in New York.

3. The remedies provided by the New York State Human Rights Law Against Discrimination are not exclusive and state administrative remedies need not be exhausted in connection with suits brought under the Federal Civil Rights Act.

4. At the time of Plaintiff's visit to the Defendant's Subject Facility in February of 2016, prior to instituting the instant action, JAMES POMPEY (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff") was a resident of the State of New York and suffers from what constitutes a "qualified disability" under the Americans with Disability Act of 1990. Mr. Pompey is a double amputee above the knees and uses a wheelchair for mobility. The Plaintiff personally visited Defendants' Property, but was denied full and equal access to, and full and equal enjoyment of the facilities at Defendants' Property, which is the subject of this lawsuit.

5. Upon information and belief defendant is authorized to conduct, and is conducting business within the State of New York and is the owner, lessee and/or operator of the real property (hereinafter and heretofore referred to collectively as "Defendant's Property"), and the owner of the improvements of the Subject Facility which is located at 69-35 Astoria Boulevard, Queens, New York, 11370 (hereinafter and heretofore referred to collectively as "Defendant's Property").

6. Upon information and belief the defendant maintains and controls the Subject Facility.

7. All events giving rise to this lawsuit occurred in the City and State of New York and as such venue is proper in this Court as the premises is located in the City and State of New York.

COUNT I – VIOLATIONS OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

8. On or about July 26, 1990, Congress enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), 42 U.S.C. §12101, et. seq. Commercial enterprises were provided one and a half years from enactment of the statute to implement its requirements. The effective date of the Title III of the ADA was January 26, 1992. 42 U.S.C. §12181; 20 C.F.R. §36.508(a).

9. Congress found, among other things, that:

(i) some 43,000,000 Americans have one or more physical or mental disabilities, and this number shall increase as the population continues to grow older;

(ii) historically, society has tended to isolate and segregate individuals with disabilities, and, despite some improvements, such forms of discrimination against disabled individuals continue to be a pervasive social problem, requiring serious attention;

(iii) discrimination against disabled individuals persists in such critical areas as employment, housing, public accommodations, transportation, communication, recreation, institutionalization, health services, voting and access to public services and public facilities;

(iv) individuals with disabilities continually suffer forms of discrimination, including outright intentional exclusion, the

discriminatory effects of architectural, transportation, and communication barriers, failure to make modifications to existing facilities and practices. Exclusionary qualification standards and criteria, segregation, and regulation to lesser services, programs, benefits, or other opportunities; and,

(v) the continuing existence of unfair and unnecessary discrimination and prejudice denies people with disabilities the opportunity to compete on an equal basis and to pursue those opportunities for which our country is justifiably famous, and costs the United States billions of dollars in unnecessary expenses resulting from dependency and non-productivity.

42 U.S.C. §12101(a)(1)-(3), (5) and (9).

10. Congress explicitly stated that the purpose of the ADA was to:

(i) provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities;

(ii) provide clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities; and,

(iii) invoke the sweep of congressional authority, including the power to enforce the fourteenth amendment and to regulate commerce, in order to address the major areas of discrimination faced on a daily by people with disabilities.

42 U.S.C. §12101(b)(1)(2) and (4).

11. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §12181(7) and 28 C.F.R. §36.104, the Subject Facility is a place of public accommodation in that it is an establishment which provides goods and services to the public.

12. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §12181(7) and 28 C.F.R. §36.104, the building and/or Subject Facility which is the subject of this action is a public accommodation covered by the ADA and which must be in compliance therewith.

13. The Plaintiff is informed and believes, and therefore alleges, that the Subject Facility has begun operations, and/or undergone substantial remodeling, repairs and/or alterations, since January 26, 1990, and/or has sufficient income to make readily achievable accessibility modifications.

14. Defendants have discriminated, and continue to discriminate, against the Plaintiff, and others who are similarly situated, by denying full and equal access to, and full and equal enjoyment of, goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations at Defendants' Property, in derogation of 42 U.S.C. §12101, et. seq., and as prohibited by 42 U.S.C. §12182, et. seq., and by failing to remove architectural barriers pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §12182(b)(2)(a)(iv), where such removal is readily achievable.

15. The Plaintiff has been unable to, and continues to be unable to, enjoy full and equal safe access to, and the benefits of, all the accommodations and services offered at Defendants' Property. Prior to the filing of this lawsuit, Plaintiff personally visited Defendants' Property, with the intention of using Defendants' facilities, but was denied access to the Subject Property, and therefore suffered an injury in fact. In addition, Plaintiff continues to desire to visit the Subject Property in the future, but continues to be injured in that he is unable to and continues to be discriminated against due to the architectural barriers which remain at Subject Property, all in violation of the ADA, and the New York State and New York City Human Rights Law.

16. Pursuant to the mandates of 42 U.S.C. §12134(a), on July 26, 1991, the Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, promulgated Federal Regulations to implement the requirements of the ADA, known as the Americans with Disabilities

Act Accessibility Guidelines (hereinafter “ADAAG”), 28 C.F.R. Part 36, under which said Department may obtain civil penalties of up to \$110,000 for the first violation and \$150,000 for any subsequent violation.

17. The Defendants’ Subject Facility is in violation of 42 U.S.C. §12181, et seq., the ADA and 28 C.F.R. §36.302, et. seq., and is discriminating against the Plaintiff as a result of inter alia, the following specific violations:

This property fails to comply with section; 206.2.1 Site Arrival Points. At least one accessible route shall be provided within the site from accessible parking spaces and accessible passenger loading zones; public streets and sidewalks; and public transportation stops to the accessible building or facility entrance they serve. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access public features of the property.

This property fails to comply with section; 206.2.2 Within a Site. At least one accessible route shall connect accessible buildings, accessible facilities, accessible elements, and accessible spaces that are on the same site. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access public features of the property.

This property fails to comply with section; 303.4 Ramps. Changes in level greater than 1/2 inch (13 mm) high shall be ramped, and shall comply with 405 or 406. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to exit and enter their vehicle while parked at the property.

This property fails to comply with section; 405.2 Slope. Ramp runs shall have a running slope not steeper than 1:12.

This property fails to comply with section; 405.7 Landings. Ramps shall have landings at the top and the bottom of each ramp run. Landings shall comply with 405.7.

This property fails to comply with section; 406 Curb Ramps 406.1 General. Curb ramps on accessible routes shall comply with 406, 405.2 through 405.5, and 405.10.

This property fails to comply with section; 406.2 Counter Slope. Counter slopes of adjoining gutters and road surfaces immediately adjacent to the curb ramp shall not be steeper than 1:20. The adjacent surfaces at transitions at curb ramps to walks, gutters, and streets shall be at the same level. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to exit and enter their vehicle while parked at the property.

This property fails to comply with section; 502.2 Vehicle Spaces. Each parking space must be at least 12 feet (3658 mm) wide, shall be marked to define the width, and shall have an adjacent access aisle complying with 502.

This property fails to comply with section; 502.3 Access Aisle. Access aisles serving parking spaces shall comply with 502.3. Access aisles shall adjoin an accessible route. Two parking spaces shall be permitted to share a common access aisle.

This property fails to comply with section; 502.4 Floor or Ground Surfaces. Parking spaces and access aisles serving them shall comply with 302. Access aisles shall be at the same level as the parking spaces they serve. Changes in level are not permitted.

This property fails to comply with section; 502.6 Identification. Parking space identification signs shall include the International Symbol of Accessibility complying with 703.7.2.1. Signs identifying van parking spaces when required by 502.2 shall contain the designation “van accessible”.

PLUMBING AND RESTROOM REQUIREMENTS

This property fails to comply with section; 604.1 General. Water closets and toilet compartments shall comply with 604.2 through 604.8. Failure to provide 60" wide toilet stall, 604.3.3.1; Failure to provide toilet stall door with a clear width of 32" when opened, 404.2.

This property fails to comply with section; 604.3 Clearance. Clearances around water closets and in toilet compartments shall comply with 604.3. Failure to provide 60" wide toilet stall, 604.3.3.1.

This property fails to comply with section; 604.5 Grab Bars. Grab bars for water closets shall comply with 609. Grab bars shall be provided on the side wall closest to the water closet and on the rear wall.

This property fails to comply with section; 606.2 Clear Floor Space. A clear floor space complying with 305, positioned for a forward approach, and knee and toe clearance complying with 306 shall be provided.

18. Upon information and belief, there are other current violations of the ADA at Defendants' Property, and only upon a full inspection can all said violations be identified.
19. To date the architectural barriers, the removal of which is readily achievable, and other violations of the ADA still exist and have not been remedied or altered in such a way as to effectuate compliance with the provisions of the ADA.
20. Pursuant to the ADA, 42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq., and 28 C.F.R. §36.304, the Defendants were required to make the Subject Facility, a place of public accommodation, accessible to persons with disabilities since January 28, 1992. To date, the Defendants have failed to comply with this mandate.
21. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §12188, this Court is vested with the authority to grant the Plaintiff's injunctive relief; including an order to alter the subject facility to make them independently accessible to, and useable by, individuals with disabilities to the extent required by the ADA, and closing the subject facilities until the requisite modifications are completed.

COUNT II - VIOLATIONS OF THE NEW YORK CITY HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

22. The New York City Human Rights Law provides:
 - (a) It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for any person, being the owner, lessee, proprietor, manager, superintendent, agent or employee of any place or provider of public accommodation because of the actual or perceived ... disability ... of any person, directly or indirectly, to refuse, withhold from or deny to such person any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities or privileges thereof ... to the effect that any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges of any such place or provider shall be refused, withheld from or denied to any person on account of ... disability ...
NYC Admin. Code § 8-107(4)(a).
23. Defendant is in violation of the New York City Human Rights Law by denying the Plaintiff full and safe access to all of the benefits, accommodations and services of the Subject Facility.
24. The Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges the allegations of paragraphs 1 through 20 as if set forth in their entirety here.

COUNT III - VIOLATIONS OF THE NEW YORK STATE HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

25. The New York State Human Rights Law provides:
 - (a) It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for any person, being the owner, lessee, proprietor, manager, superintendent, agent or employee of any place of public accommodation.... because of the ... disability ... of any person, directly or indirectly, to refuse, withhold from or deny to such person any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities or privileges thereof ... to the effect that any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges of any such place shall be refused, withheld from or denied to any person on account of ... disability ...
NYS Exec. Law § 296 (2)(a).

26. Defendant's Property is a place of public accommodation as defined in the New York State Human Rights Law.

27. The Defendant has further violated the New York State Human Rights Law by being in violation of the rights provided under the ADA.

28. Defendant is in violation of the New York State Human Rights Law by denying the Plaintiff full and safe access to all of the benefits, accommodations and services of the Subject Facility.

29. The Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges the allegations of paragraphs 1 through 22 as if set forth in their entirety here.

ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS

30. The Plaintiff has been obligated to retain the undersigned counsel for the filing and prosecution of this action. The Plaintiff is entitled to have his reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and expenses paid by the Defendants, pursuant to the ADA and the New York City Human Rights Law.

31. Plaintiff prays for judgment pursuant to N.Y. Exec. Law § 297, including compensatory damages contemplated by § 297(9).

DAMAGES

31. Plaintiff demands TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$25,000.00) in compensatory damages under the Human Rights Law of the City and State of New York.

INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

32. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188, this Court is vested with the authority to grant the Plaintiff's injunctive relief; including an order to alter the subject facilities to make them readily accessible to, and useable by, individuals with disabilities to the extent required by the ADA, the New York City Human Rights Law, and the New York State Human Rights Law and closing the subject facilities until the requisite modifications are completed.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff hereby demands judgment against the Defendant and requests the following injunctive and declaratory relief:

- A. The Court declares that the subject property and Subject Facility owned, operated, leased, controlled and/or administered by the Defendant is violative of the ADA, the New York City Human Rights Law, and of the New York State Human Rights Law;
- B. The Court enter an Order requiring the Defendant to alter their facilities and amenities to make them accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities to the full extent required by the Title III of the ADA and by NYCHRL, and the NYSHRL;
- C. Award plaintiff compensatory damages in a sum of TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$25,000.00);
- D. Issue a permanent injunction against the defendant, requiring defendant, and all persons or entities in active concert therewith, to provide accessible route into the restaurant at the Premises for individuals who use wheelchairs, and to make all public portions of the Premises accessible to him.

F. Find that plaintiff is a prevailing party in this lawsuit and award reasonable attorney's fees, costs and expenses against defendants, and award such other and further relief, at law or in equity, to which plaintiff may be justly entitled and

G. The Court award such other and further relief as it deems necessary, just and proper.

JURY DEMANDED

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury of all issues of fact and damages.

Dated: Syosset, New York
April , 2016

Respectfully submitted,

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